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Human Rights Violations

in East Timor

ETISC II
EAST TIMOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER

Warning

IMAGES CONTAINED IN THIS BOOKLET ARE DISTURBING. PLEASE BE AWARE OF THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT, ESPECIALLY ON CHILDREN.

The expression 'human rights violations' is commonly used . But this abstract and distant term helps hide the fact that these violations - often occurring in a country that seems very far away - are being suffered by people just like ourselves. People with the same flesh and blood and feelings - including pain and fear.

Images can have an immediacy that transcends words and cuts through the abstraction. For that reason the East Timor International Support Center decided to put this booklet together with some of the pictures that have been smuggled out from East Timor over the years - to try to awake the world to the situation there.

We hope that this booklet will assist in creating sufficient international determination to resolve the East Timor issue and stop these ongoing violations.

Contents:

pg

INTRODUCTIONS by

Dr. Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2

Bishop Hilton Deakin, Chairman of the East Timor Human Rights Centre 2

BACKGROUND ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST TIMOR:

- Summary of Human Rights in East Timor 3
- The East Timor Human Rights Centre: excerpts from the 1996 Annual Report 5
- Amnesty International: excerpts from various reports 6
- The United Nations Human Rights Commission: Resolution on East Timor, May 1997 6

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Photos of human rights violations from the early 1980s 7

Photos from the period of famine - 1979 to 1982 9

Photos of violations from the mid 1980s till 1991 11

The 'Dili massacre' in 1991 13

Torture and murder in East Timor after 1991 15

CONCLUSION 24

An old man in visible pain lies in a ditch surrounded by concerned villagers. He has just been bashed and left there by passing Indonesian military. The photographer came across the scene by chance. Steve Cox-1991.

Introductions:

By Jose Ramos Horta

There is overwhelming evidence that torture is almost routinely committed against the East Timorese people by the Indonesian armed forces. This is done to frighten the people of East Timor into acceptance of Indonesian cultural and political control and to extract information and confessions, whether true or false. Within hours of arrest, torture has probably occurred and may continue for days while the detainee is held incommunicado. The outcome may be release but often in East Timor it leads to murder or 'disappearance'.

By the time letters from Amnesty International and elsewhere reach the Indonesian commander in Dili the Indonesian law has been broken by its own military, the UN Convention against Torture has been made into a mockery and the body if not the spirit of another Timorese youth is broken. The ongoing costs to the families of the victims, who are now so many in East Timor, cannot even be estimated. The damage to East Timorese society as a result of more than two decades of military occupation is almost overwhelming, yet the East Timorese people have not given up something they cherish dearly - their right to be free.

How can compromise be found with the occupiers when they so routinely violate the bodies and souls of the occupied? Even whilst the Nobel Peace Prize awards helped awake the world to the terrible suffering of the East Timorese people, the Indonesian military has rained down more terror on the Timorese population. There can be no choice but to hasten the search for demilitarisation and self-determination in order to stop one of the greatest and most resolvable of human tragedies.

Jose Ramos Horta is the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Co-Laureate and Special Representative for the East Timorese resistance.

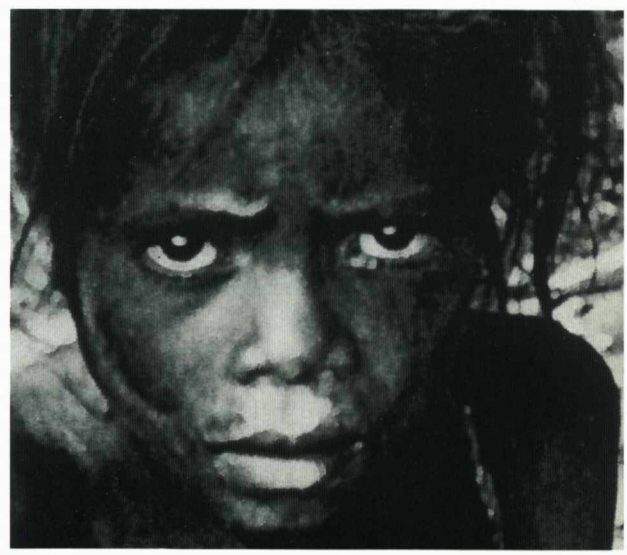
By Bishop Hilton Deakin

Years of travel throughout East Timor reveal it. The sight of wounded bodies, of mass graves affirm it. Numberless stories from the victims of the ever-present oppression remove any doubt. There is an awesome collective suffering 22 years long that still burdens the people of East Timor.

These photographs capture graphically the pain, the barbarity, the suffering, the inhumanity of it all. In spite of the continuing oppression, many still pursue policies of economic advantage and military accommodation, and use a language of silence over abuses of human rights. There are even those in Australia who would wish to see the asylum seekers who fled this oppression removed from our midst.

But these photographs tell well enough a tremendously sad story - of a cruel affront to our common humanity.

Bishop Deakin is an Auxiliary Bishop from Melbourne, Australia, who has spent a considerable time in East Timor over a number of visits. He is Chairman of The East Timor Human Rights Centre.



Human Rights in East Timor:

Since the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia in December 1975, East Timor has been a major international human rights ' black spot'. But for much of this time it received very little attention- until he images of the 1991 'Dili Massacre' were seen around the world. The Indonesian military had closed the territory to observers including the media for 14 years - after killing 6 journalists during the invasion. Thus when occasional smuggled letters emerged telling of atrocities and massacres it was relatively easy for Indonesia and its apologists to dismiss these as 'unsubstantiated'.

The truth is only now beginning to emerge into international consciousness that what went on in East Timor is one of the major 'holocausts' of the post World War 2 period. Reliable sources quote a death toll of about 250,000 people. In East Timor this is about one third of the original population. The size of the death toll combined with Indonesian policies that seem to be explicitly aimed at lowering and diluting the Timorese population (enforced sterilisation of women with Depo Provera and migration of tens of thousands of Indonesians into Timor) have led to the accusation that this is intentional genocide by the Indonesian regime.

The Indonesian invasion began with massive human rights violations from the outset. Looting, rape and killing of civilians was a feature of the invasion with dozens dragged to the dock and executed on the first days. This pattern of contempt for basic human rights continued throughout the occupation and continues to this day. The Indonesian forces used conventional and napalm bombing to destroy the bases of the population and their ability to grow food. The subsequent starvation led to many deaths amongst young children and older people and ultimately forced many down from the mountains into 'resettlement camps' where they were in the control of the Indonesian military and were subject to diseases like malaria and TB. Timorese fighters and their families were promised amnesties if they surrendered but evidence is that many were raped, tortured and killed.

Torture of civilians and resistance fighters by the Indonesian military has been widespread. Imprisonment in East Timor will normally lead to physical abuse. Types of torture that have been frequently reported include rape, electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, removal of nails, soldiers bouncing on chairs positioned on people's bare toes, beating with fists, rifle butts or clubs, immersion in water to the point of suffocation and threatened or real execution. Prisoners may be executed or "disappeared".

Torture is done for the gathering of information but also to instill a climate of fear. In spite of the climate of oppression many Timorese still take risks by staging demonstrations whenever foreign diplomats or journalists visit, working in the clandestine movement or fighting in the mountains.

The Indonesian military has established an intense and pervasive presence in East Timor - most small hamlets and villages, as well as all larger centres, have Indonesian troops in them and plain clothes Indonesian agents ('Intel') are plentiful. In addition the Indonesian military have used bribes and

intimidation to establish a network of informers - called 'bufos' in local slang.

The monitoring of human rights in East Timor has always been extremely difficult. Amnesty International and Asia Watch (now Human Rights Watch Asia) have never been allowed to enter the territory. Even the International Red Cross (who are allowed to stay only because they do not make their findings public) have found access to prisons and working conditions impossible at times and have withdrawn for some years because of lack of cooperation by the Indonesian military. In addition to these gross violations of human rights the Timorese are being oppressed more subtly by destruction and dilution of their culture. The East Timorese traditionally lived a village based lifestyle in the mountains. The Indonesian invasion destroyed most of the villages through bombing and forced the population to relocate because of starvation - with this much of the traditional lifestyle and social structures were destroyed. Now Indonesia is actively encouraging poor families from Indonesia to move to East Timor where they can settle - and further dilute the local people and culture. So far it is believed about 150,000 migrants have moved to East Timor.

Many Timorese describe being 'third class citizens in their own country', finding that jobs and opportunities go to Indonesians or the new migrants who come in. They feel they have no choice in, and do not benefit from , the limited 'development' that the Indonesian occupation has created.Since East Timor was 'opened up' in 1989, the young people have used almost every opportunity to tell the world about their dissatisfaction with what has been happening in their country. This is often done at great personal risk. Before most official visits surveillance and repression is stepped up. Often people are threatened and may be jailed and tortured. A climate of fear is created making protest very difficult. Important visitors are watched closely and shadowed by Indonesian agents making any contact from the local people dangerous.

In spite of these pressures the Timorese have repeatedly managed to express a continuing desire for freedom and independence. When the Pope visited in 1989 a demonstration for independence erupted in the crowd. Then in 1990 when US Ambassador Monju visited there was a demonstration for 'Peace and Justice'. As he drove away the military turned on the youths. They were severely beaten before being arrested. It is not known how many died .

In November 1991 a remembrance march for an East Timorese youth, killed two weeks earlier by the Indonesian military, turned into an out-pouring of pro-independence sentiment. Thousands of marchers at the Santa Cruz Cemetery were confronted by a phalanx of soldiers who opened fire without warning, using automatic weapons. Hundreds died then and many more including the wounded were executed later. For the first time a cameraman recorded the killing and the 'Dili Massacre' became an international scandal.

An increased world awareness and concern about the problem has, unfortunately, not resulted in any tangible improvement in human rights within East Timor or any sign of a more conciliatory approach by the Indonesian occupying forces. The pattern in the 1990s is unchanged - arbitrary arrest, torture and 'disappearance' remains common. Even whilst a large percentage of the Timorese population welcomed Bishop Belo home after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, the Indonesian military were engaged in another 'crackdown'. Some victims of this can be seen in the photos in this brochure.

Even as the world began to recognise the need for justice in East Timor, with the granting of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, the human rights situation was described by Bishop Belo as " even worse than before".

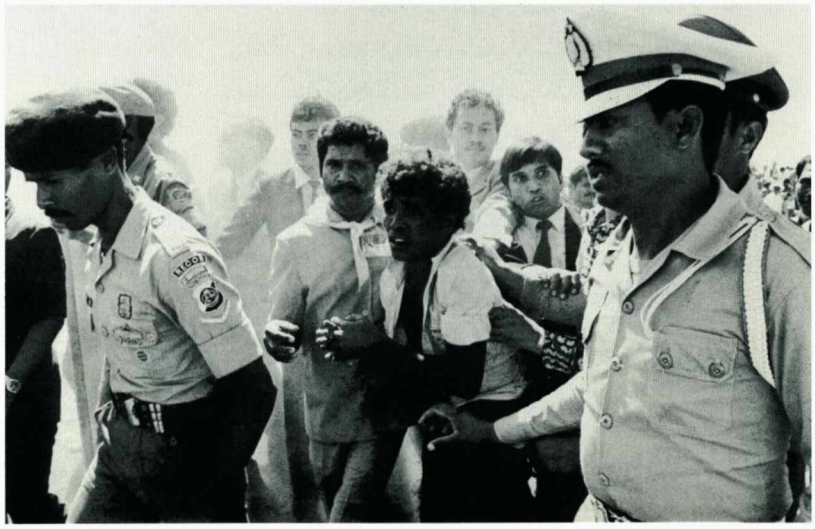
Reports from Human Rights Monitors

THE EAST TIMOR HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

In its February 1997 report the East Timor Human Rights Centre based in Melbourne, Australia noted that "Indonesia has failed to implement most of the recommendations from the UN Commission on Human Rights and its thematic mechanisms. It has not accounted fully for those killed in the Santa Cruz massacre of 12th November 1991 nor held those responsible for the massacre to account; it has not released all prisoners of conscience or allowed East Timorese detainees full access to legal counsel and a fair trial; it has not allowed access to human rights organizations. It has not implemented most of the detailed recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Torture in 1992, nor those of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions in 1994. It has only implemented two of the recommendations in the 1993 resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also made a number of recommendations during his visit to Indonesia and East Timor in December 1995 which have not been implemented and require more active pursuit, in particular the efforts to establish a permanent UN presence in East Timor. The Indonesian government has not encouraged further visits to East Timor or by representatives of the UN. Nigel Rodley, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture was refused permission to visit East Timor in 1996."

The East Timor Human Rights Centre also noted " in 1996 serious and systematic abuses of fundamental human rights have continued in East Timor. The ETHRC received reports of 24 suspected extra judicial executions, most of which have not been investigated by Indonesian authorities, and numerous reports of "disappearances". 1996 saw a high level of arbitrary arrests with up to 381 East Timorese people being arrested, many of them young. Reports have continued that detainees are systematically subjected to torture and ill treatment and sentenced at trials which are unfair.

There is a climate of real fear in East Timor as people are regularly subjected to intimidation , beatings, rape and other acts of repression by the Indonesian authorities. The ETHRC's findings have been confirmed by the US Department of State which concluded in its 1996 report that Indonesia continued to commit serious human



A young Timorese man is arrested after a demonstration that took place during the visit of the Pope in 1989. He is surrounded by Indonesian security and is visibly frightened. It has been alleged that youths thought to have been involved in that demonstration were hunted down, tortured and 'disappeared' by Indonesian forces over many years. Richard Ellis 1989.

rights abuses in East Timor where there were further instances of killings, disappearances, torture and excessive use of force"

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

In its 1984 report Amnesty International noted that "Since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975 AI had received reports that Indonesian forces had persistently resorted to torture and the arbitrary killing of non -combatants. In July AI received a copy of manuals issued to Indonesian troops in East Timor which indicated that such practices were officially condoned". Further it noted in that report it "was concerned about new reports of serious human rights violations in East Timor, including the disappearance and extra judicial killing of non combatants and the torture and ill treatment of people taken into the custody of Indonesian forces".

A decade later, the Amnesty annual report of 1995 signified that there had been little change - "Access by international and domestic organizations to East Timor continued to be restricted, preventing effective human rights monitoring" and "Torture and ill treatment of detainees continued to be routine" in East Timor.

Meanwhile AI's annual reports were dotted with examples documenting continuing abuses. For example its 1982 report stated that their information indicated "that 500 Timorese civilians (apparently not engaged in combat) had been executed by Indonesian forces during an operation from July to September 1981". It's 1984 report noted "as many as 200 people in the village of Kraras, Viqueque, had been killed by Indonesian troops." In 1985 "approximately 100 men living near the village of Hauba, near Bobonaro in the west of the territory were reportedly taken into custody and killed by Indonesian troops".

In its report "Torture in the 80's" Amnesty noted that it had "on several occasions requested the Indonesian government to investigate allegations of torture and ill treatment in East Timor but no such investigations have been conducted. Indeed there is strong evidence that torture is officially condoned. A secret Indonesian military document issued in July 1982, of whose authenticity AI is confident, contains guidelines on the interrogation of captives which clearly condone the use of torture and death threats".

Amnesty International has requested permission from the Indonesian government to visit East Timor but has never been allowed access.

THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

In its resolution on the "Situation of human rights in East Timor" of May 1997 the UNHRC "Expressed its deep concern

(a) at the continuing reports of violations of human rights in East Timor, including reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture and arbitrary detention as reported in the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

(b) at the lack of progress made by the Indonesian authorities towards complying with their commitments undertaken in statements agreed by consensus at previous sessions of the Commission.

(c) that the Government of Indonesia has not yet invited thematic rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission to East Timor, in spite of commitments undertaken to do so in 1997

(d) at the policy of systematic migration to East Timor."

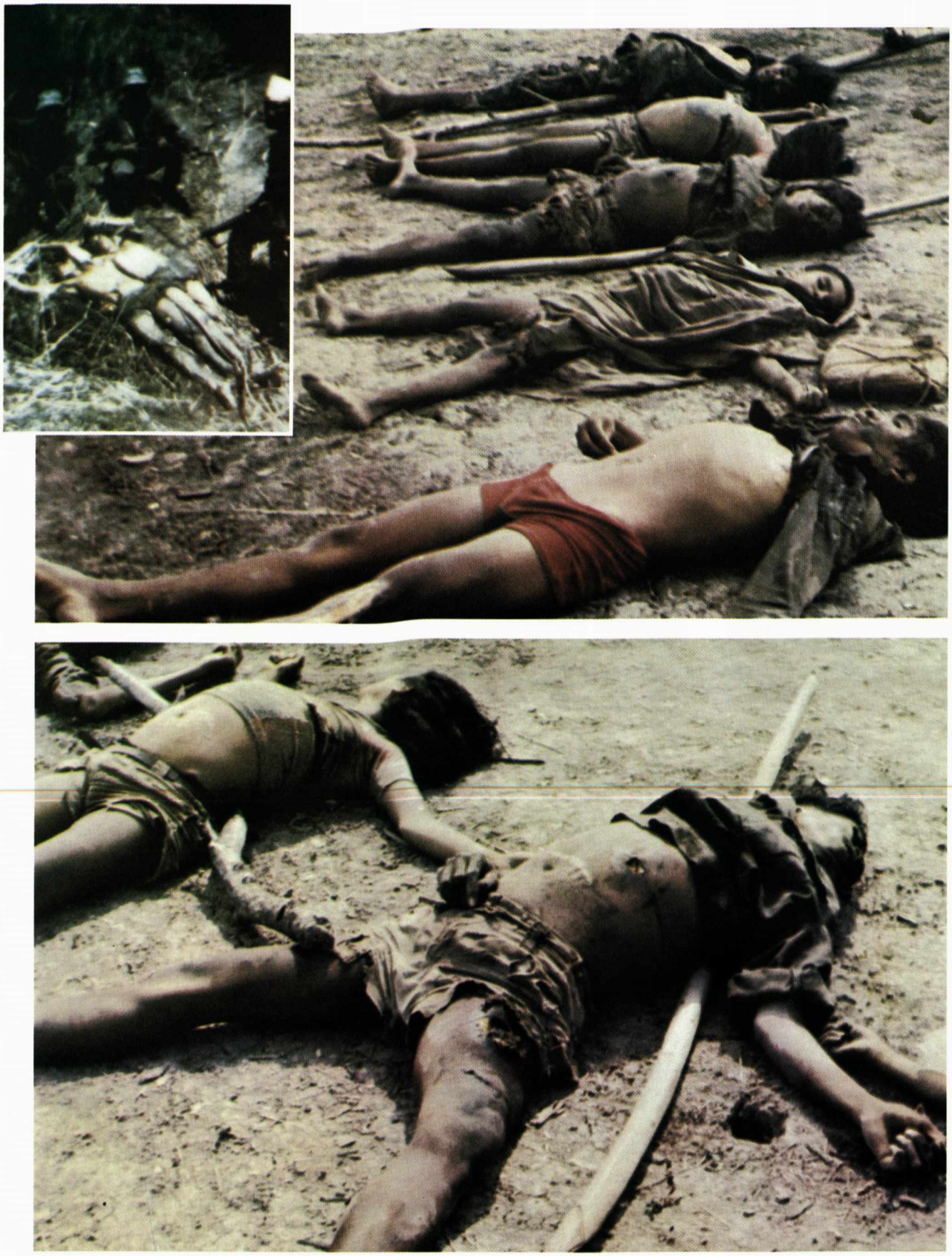
This strongly worded resolution reflected increasing international concern at the deteriorating human rights within East Timor and growing disillusionment with Indonesia's refusal to comply with past commitments or show any willingness to address the fundamental problems.

Human Rights Violations from early 1980s

Indonesian troops pose with their trophies - the heads of captured Timorese resistance members. The first photographic evidence of violations in East Timor only emerged in the 1980's because up until then there had been a very effective blockade of information. 1981.

Indonesian troops with decapitated heads of Timorese.This may be done as a 'trophy' or to create terror. 1981.

Indonesians carry body of tortured Timorese victim. The victims eyes appear to have been pierced and possibly levered from their sockets. The victims mouth is stuffed with a gag. Trauma to the skull is evident. 1981.

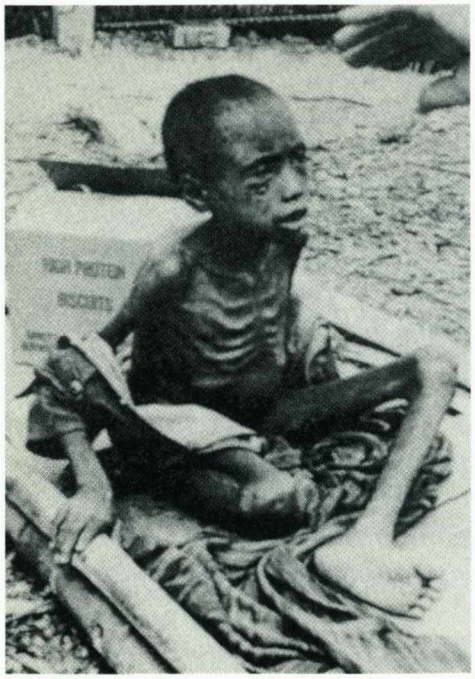


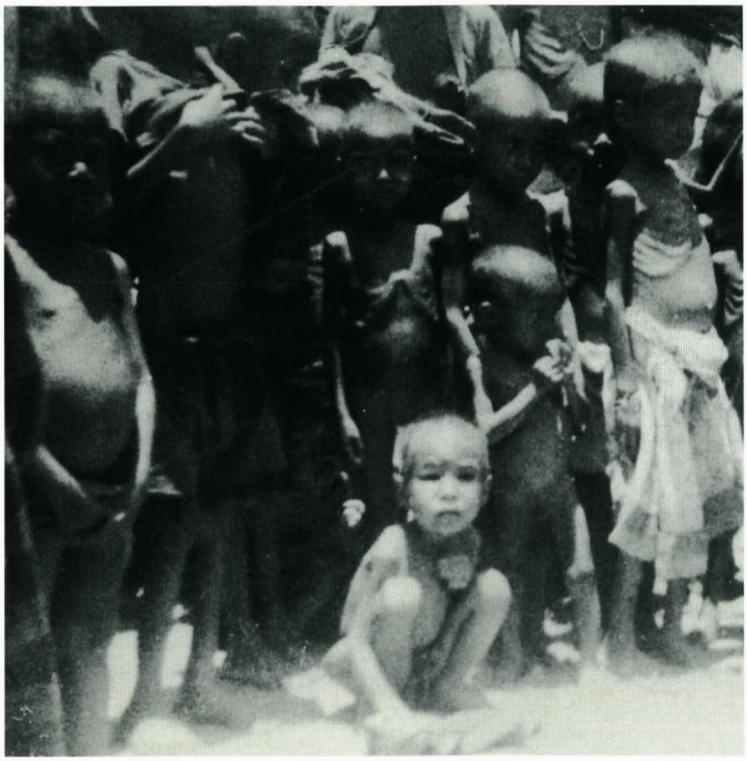
Inset: Three Indonesian soldiers surround the bodies of two semi naked Timorese women. One woman's body has a large abdominal wound. Rape of local women by the Indonesian military has been very common in East Timor. ~ early 1980's.

Top: Bodies of young Timorese, victims of the 'Fence of Legs' operation. Many Timorese civilians died in this operation. 1981.

Bottom: Bodies of young Timorese victims of the 'Fence of Legs' operation in 1981. In this operation, the Indonesian military crossed the country in a line forcing members of the local population ahead of them as a human shield. 1981.

Famine - 1979 to 1982

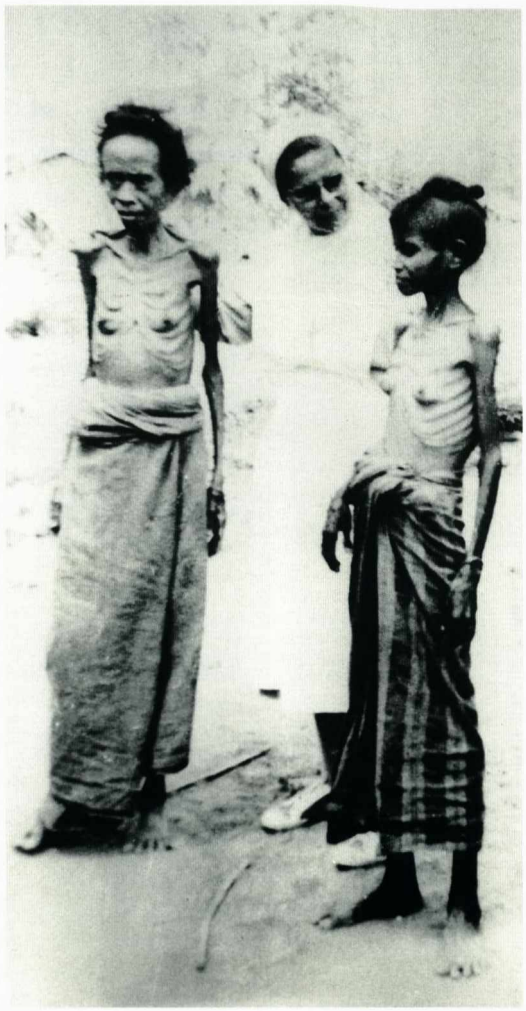




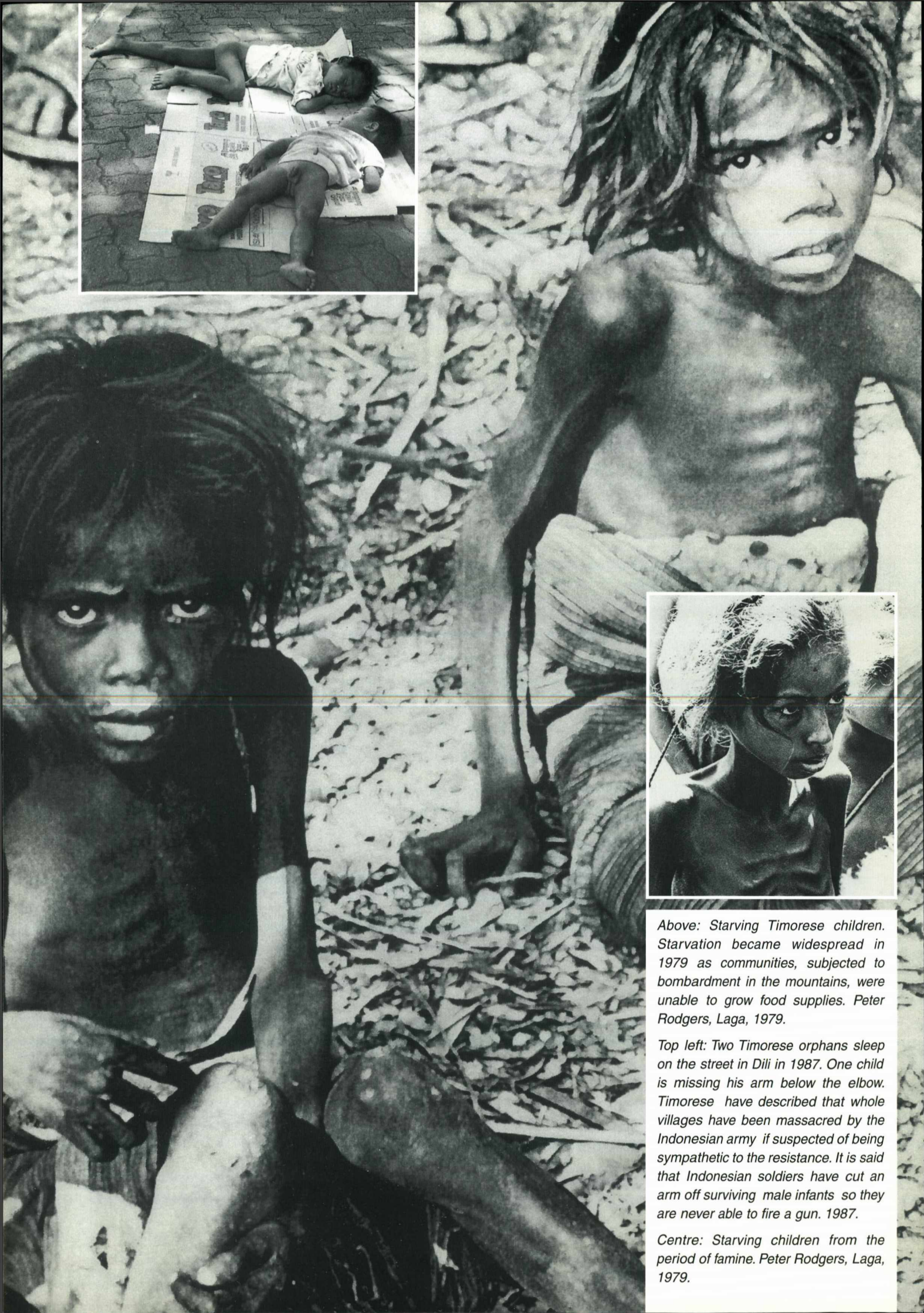
Top left: A ten year old boy of Uatolari, being treated by the International Red Cross for malnourishment, malaria and tuberculosis. An experienced observer at the time commented that the famine was "as bad as Biafra". December 1979.

Top right: Starving Timorese children at Laga on the north coast in 1979. In this year the starving population was forced down from the mountains into Indonesian "resettlement camps". Here the effects of starvation combined with exposure to mosquitoes caused increased levels of disease such as malaria and tuberculosis. Peter Rodgers, 1979.

Bottom left: A photo from the period of severe famine: 1978 to 1981. About 1980.



Above: Two emaciated Timorese women with a nun during the period of famine. The death toll at this time was massive with reports suggesting the loss of life was in the range of 100 000 people. ~ 1980.

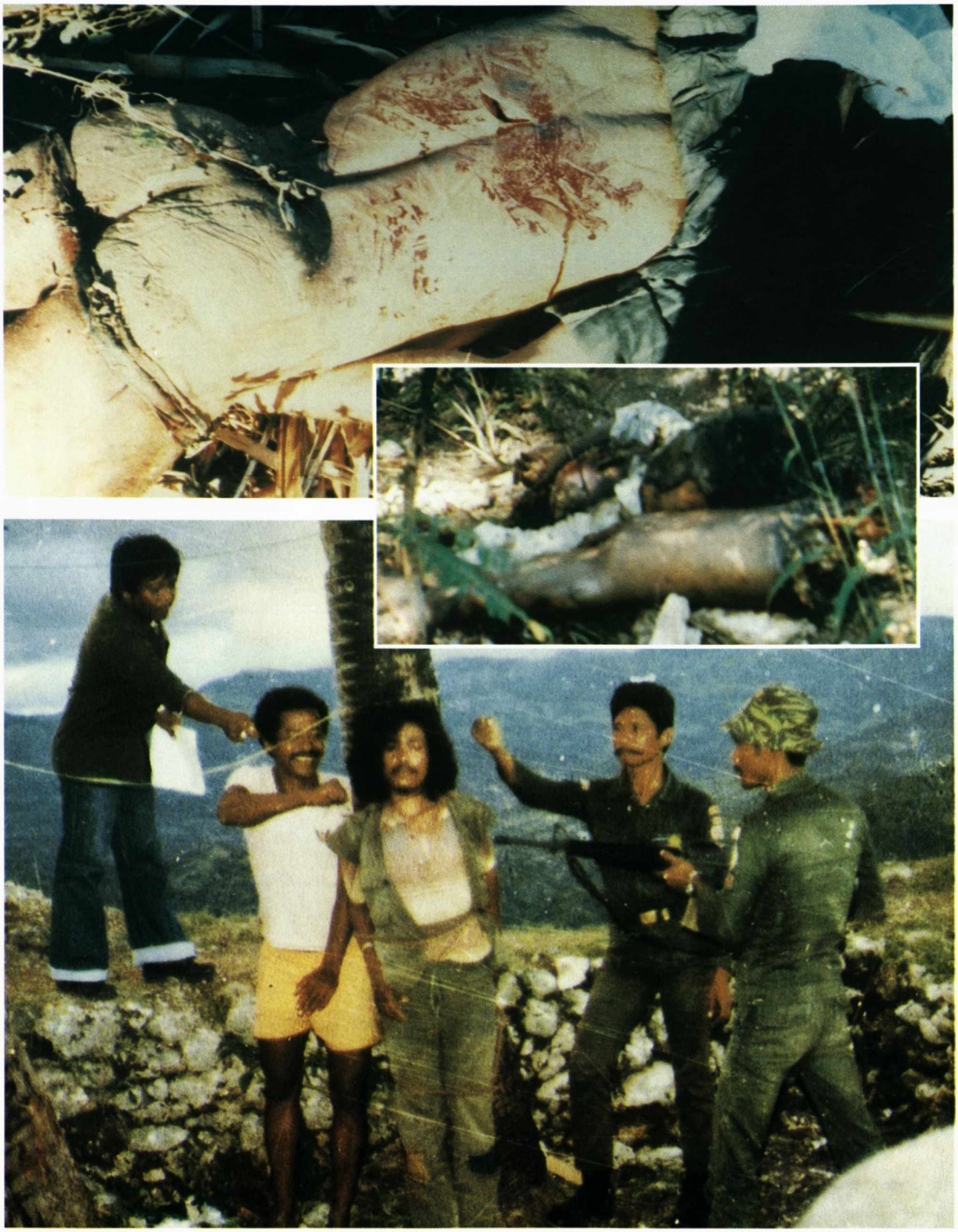


Above: Starving Timorese children. Starvation became widespread in 1979 as communities, subjected to bombardment in the mountains, were unable to grow food supplies. Peter Rodgers, Laga, 1979.

Top left: Two Timorese orphans sleep on the street in Dili in 1987. One child is missing his arm below the elbow. Timorese have described that whole villages have been massacred by the Indonesian army if suspected of being sympathetic to the resistance. It is said that Indonesian soldiers have cut an arm off surviving male infants so they are never able to fire a gun. 1987.

Centre: Starving children from the period of famine. Peter Rodgers, Laga, 1979.

Violations from mid 1980s until 1991



Top: Body of a Timorese villager tortured and killed by the Indonesian army. The victim appears to have been beaten and dragged around prior to death. There is a stab wound on the right mid back. early 1990s.

Bottom: Execution of resistance fighter in East Timor in April 1984. The captors are probably holding a piece of wire across the victims throat, threatening to 'garrott' rather than shoot him. 1984.

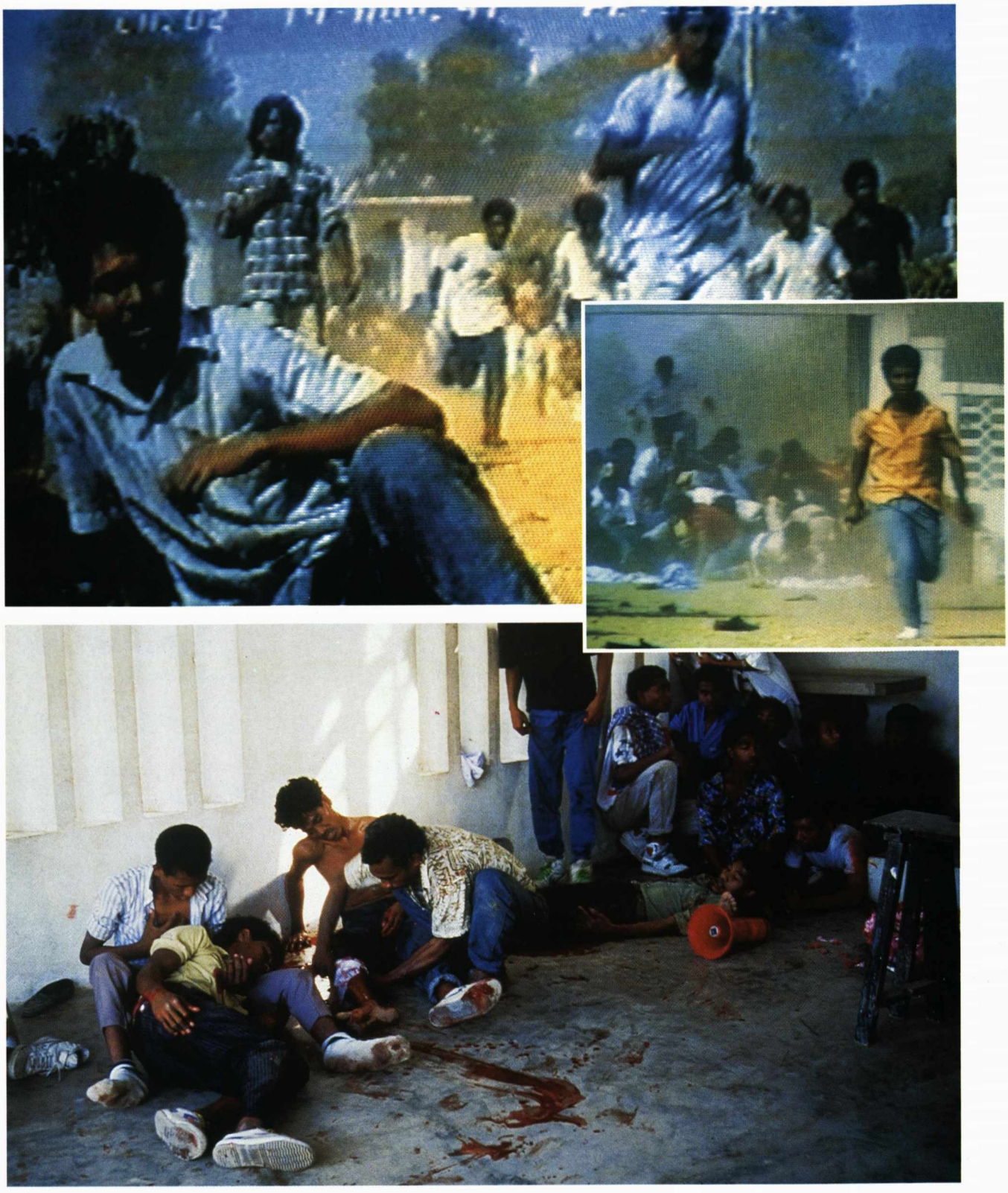
Inset: Dismembered human remains believed to be of a Timorese woman killed in a massacre at the village of Hauba. ~ 1987.

Above: Indonesian soldiers pose with the decapitated heads of Timorese. June 1990.

Inset: Body of captured East Timorese fighter is carried in Indonesian military jeep. Signs of physical abuse are evident. A gag is shoved in the victims mouth. Indonesian soldiers often take photos of killing and other atrocities as mementos. ~ 1990.

Above: Dead bodies of the wife and children of a Timorese resistance fighter killed in reprisal in their resettlement camp by an Indonesian death squad. ~ 1990.

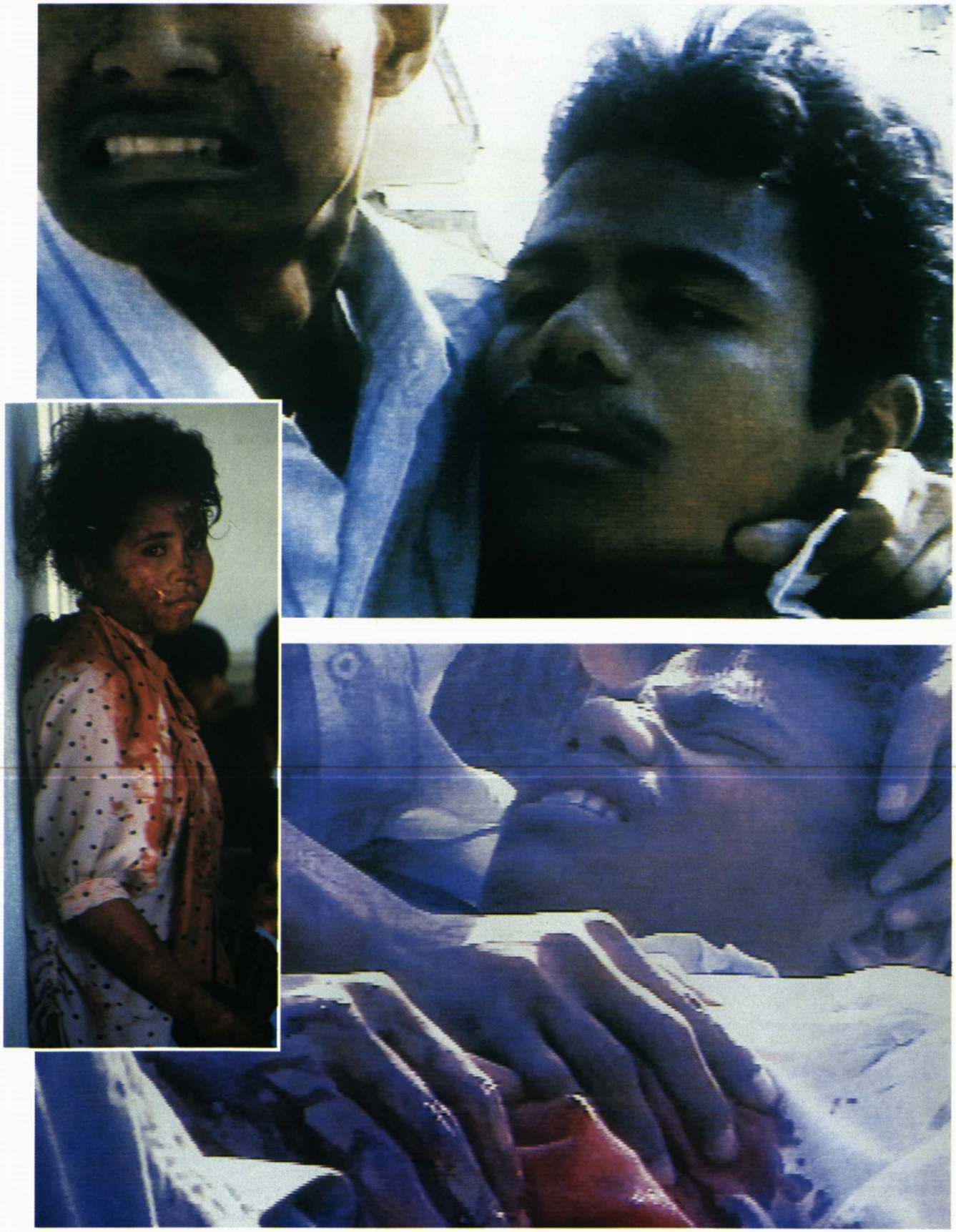
The Dili Massacre - 1991



Top: A wounded man lies in the cemetery during the Dili Massacre as others try to escape from the firing behind. After opening fire on the crowd outside the cemetery the Indonesian troops came in clubbing and dragging away injured survivors. Max Stahl. 1991.

Inset: A man runs from the massacre occurring at the Santa Cruz Cemetery on 12th November 1991. The massacre is occurring on the other side of the cemetery walls and the bodies of those trying to escape are piling up in the cemetery gate. Indonesian troops opened fire without warning on a peaceful demonstration. Max Stahl. 1991.

Bottom: Survivors, some badly injured, huddle in the chapel of the Santa Cruz Cemetery in the aftermath of the massacre. Many of those who survived the massacre were killed over the next days. Steve Cox, 1991.

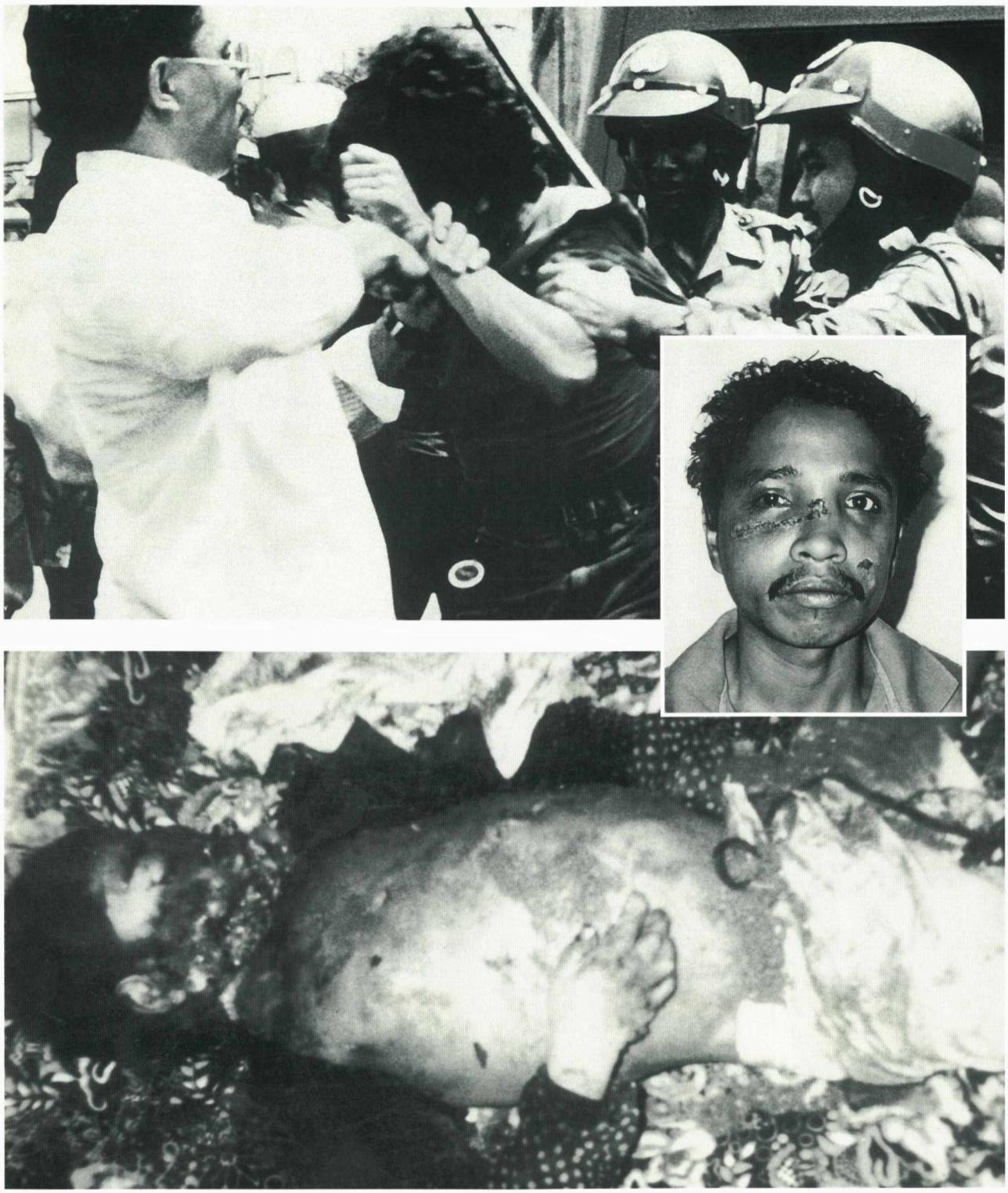


Top: An injured victim of the massacre lies in his friends arms. Max Stahl. 1991.

Inset: A woman covered in blood looks stunned in the aftermath of the Dili Massacre. She is in the chapel where some took refuge. Observers described the terror of being dragged away whilst other victims were clubbed to death. Steve Cox. 1991.

Bottom: A victim with an abdominal wound lies being helped by friends. The total death toll was probably over 400, including those killed over subsequent days. Max Stahl, 1991.

Torture and murder in East Timor after 1991

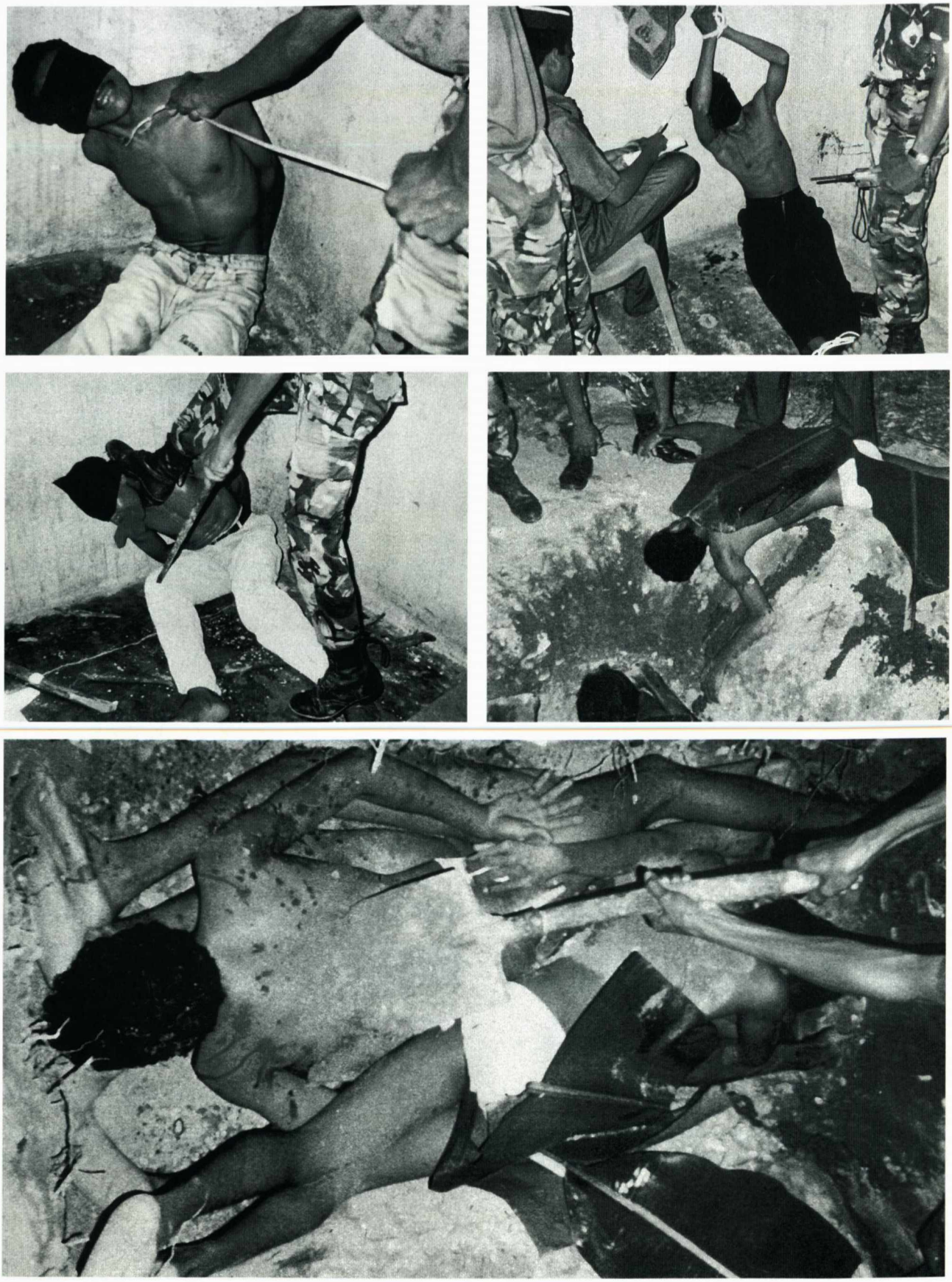


Top: A young Timorese is arrested in Jakarta for attending a rally to protest the massacre that had just occurred in his homeland in November 1991. Those arrested for this peaceful protest were jailed for many years. Those accused of organising the Dili demonstration have been jailed for up to 15 years. The Indonesian soldiers responsible for the massacre have barely been investigated or punished. Enny Nuraheni, 1991.

Inset: The face of a young man who has been arrested by the Indonesian military in Dili and smashed across the face with an iron bar. His nose and right cheek appear broken. Subsequently he was rearrested and 'disappeared'. 1995.

Bottom: Photo of a young boy murdered by the Indonesian military near Baucau in late 1994. His family tried to exhume his body from its shallow grave and take it back, but the military found out, retrieved the body and threatened the family with reprisals if there was trouble. -photo arrived 1995.

Torture and execution sequence



A series of smuggled photos from early 1996. They show the torture, murder and burial of Timorese youths by the Indonesian military. Torture and beating is almost routine on arrest and is done to extract information and create compliance through terror. Photos show electric shocks being given from mains wires and from a torture device.

Killings after Nobel Peace Prize

These photos are believed to be at SGI (Strategic Intelligence) 'Red House' in Baucau in December 1996. These victims were arrested in Viqueque and imprisoned and killed in Baucau.

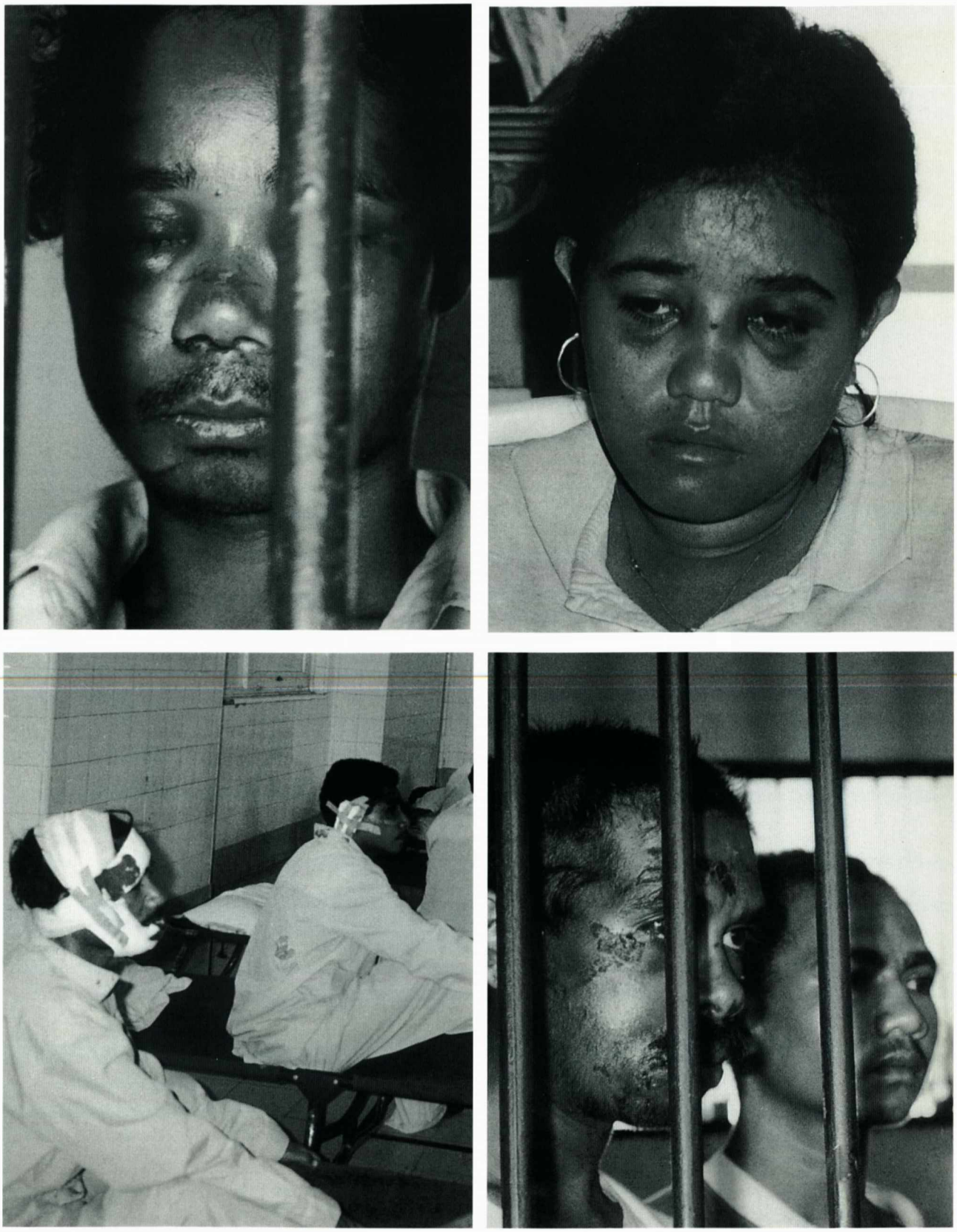
Torture and execution sequence

These photos show a sequence of the torture, murder and burial of at least one Timorese youth by members of the Indonesian armed forces. After the burial in a shallow grave the Indonesian perpetrators celebrate and arrange a photo with the Indonesian flag. Probably from early 1997.

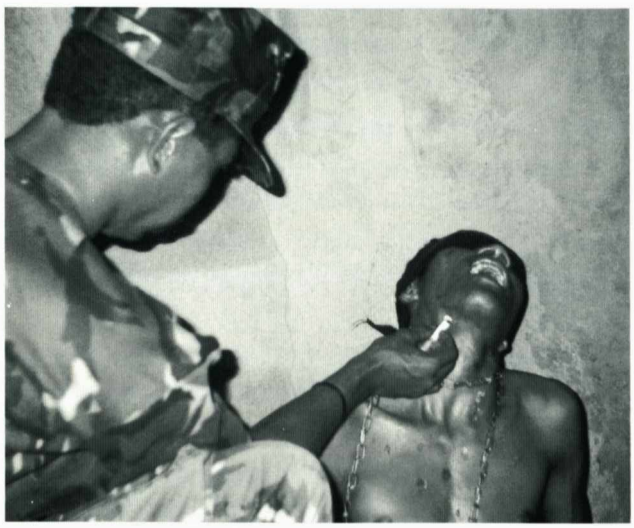
Video from jail

'Still' pictures from a video taken in jail in Dili (the capital of East Timor) show that the majority of Timorese youths in jail have been bashed during detention. Torture and bashing in prisons in East Timor is described as almost routine. Late 1994.

After the visit of the U.N. envoy to East Timor in March 1997



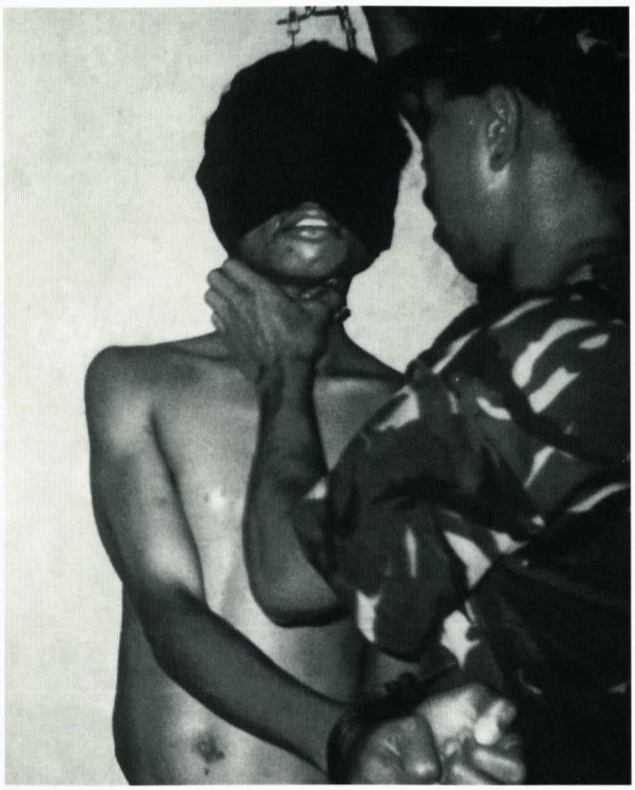
In March 1997 during the visit of a U.N. representative to East Timor there was a demonstration and a group of young Timorese presented a petition. The Indonesian military opened fire on them killing four. Shown here are photos of those arrested, including women, who had been bashed in detention. Wounded victims in the hospital are also shown.



Top left: Blindfolded and tied to a wire bed frame, a Timorese victim is tortured with a pole being thrust into his mouth. ~ photo received May 1997.

Middle left: Blindfolded and tied to a chair a youth is burned with cigarettes by an Indonesian soldier. Burn marks elsewhere on the chest and neck are visible. ~ early 1997.

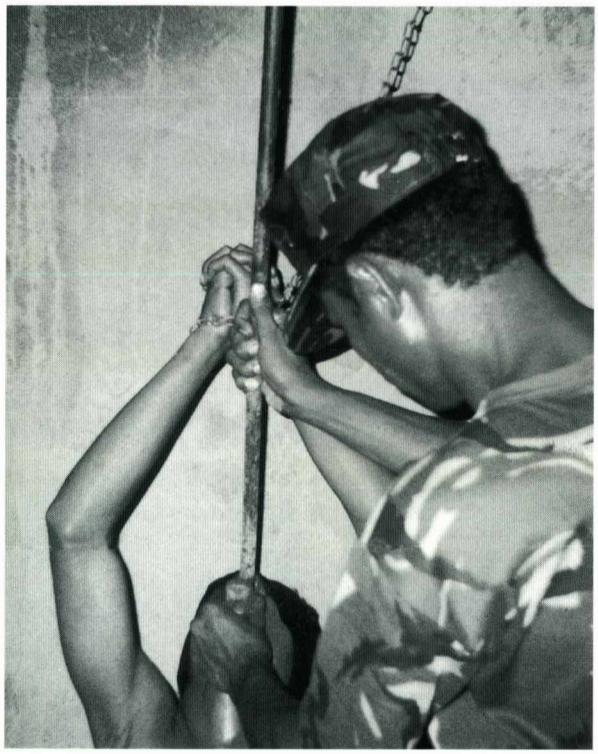
Bottom left: The same victim is strangled by an Indonesian torturer as chain around his neck is pulled tight across his face. The soldier has his boot in back of victims neck. ~ early 1997.

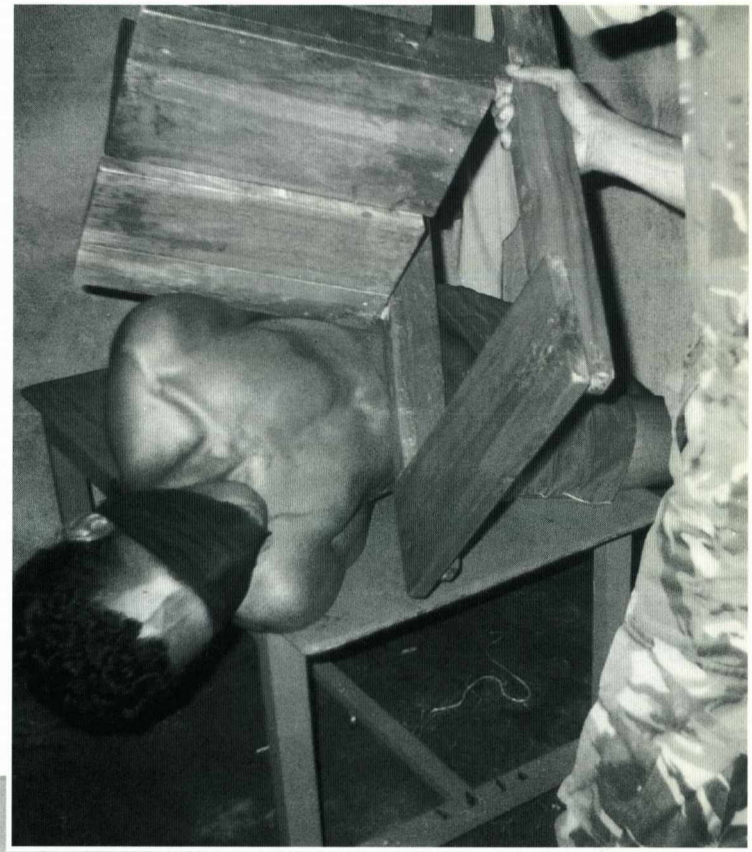


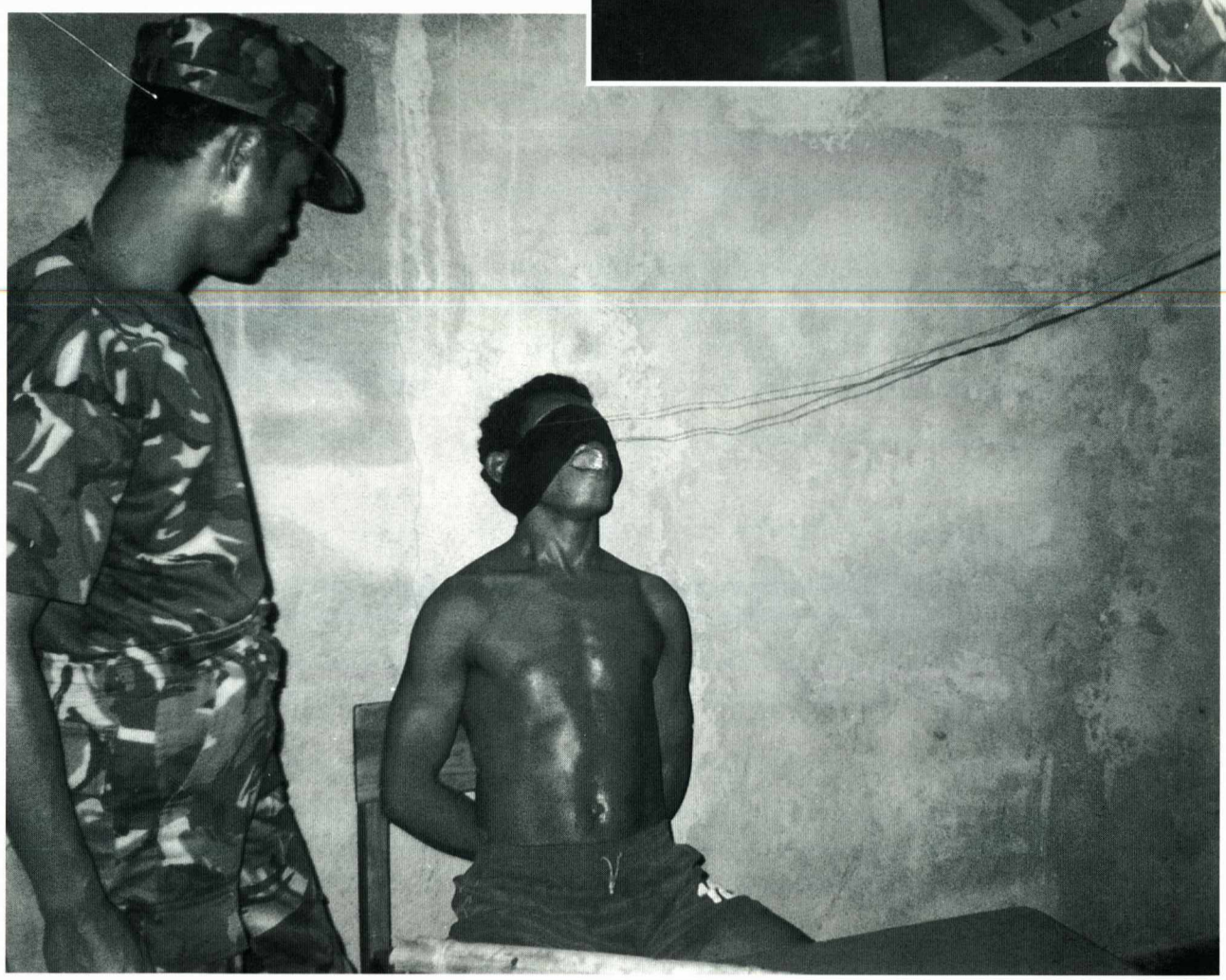
Top right: Victims are tied by the wrists through holes in a wall. A pole is being thrust into the victim's face. probably early 1997.

Middle right: A Timorese victim being choked and strangled .

Bottom left: The process continues, now on the floor.







Top left: The victim has a pipe forced into his mouth, possibly causing laceration and trauma, gagging and asphyxiation.

Top right: Youth is hit across the torso with a chair.

Bottom: The same youth being given electric shocks to the head whilst an Indonesian soldier supervises.

Top left: A Timorese youth is tortured by having a chair leg crushed onto his toes. This is a commonly used technique in East Timor. Victims describe Indonesian soldiers jumping onto chairs or tables placed on the victims' toes. Behind a body can be seen under a sheet.

Top right: The same victim has his legs wrenched apart.

Inset: The bodies of Timorese youths are laid out beside a shallow grave.

Bottom: Indonesian soldiers shovel dirt over the bodies of young Timorese lying in their shallow grave. It is believed these graves are near Manatuto, between Dili and Baucau.

Conclusion:

The resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in May, 1997 called upon the Government of Indonesia:

"(a) To take the necessary measures in order to ensure full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of East Timor;

(b) To ensure the early release of East Timorese detained or convicted for political reasons and to clarify further the circumstances surrounding the violent incident that took place in Dili in November 1991;

(c) To ensure that all East Timorese in custody are treated humanely and in accordance with international standards;

(d) To cooperate fully with the Commission and its thematic rapporteurs and working groups and to invite these rapporteurs and working groups to visit East Timor, in particular the Special Rapporteur on Torture,

(f) To bring about the envisaged assignment of a programme officer of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Jakarta office of the United Nations Development Programme, as follow up to the commitment undertaken, and to provide this officer with unhindered access to East Timor.

(g) To provide access to East Timor for human rights organisations."

These are practical proposals that could help end the terrible suffering of the people of East Timor. However this will only be achieved if, unlike past UN resolutions on East Timor, this resolution is acted on.

If you would like to help end the suffering of the East Timorese people, please encourage your organisation and government to give strong support to the implementation of this United Nations resolution, so that it may be effective.

Young Timorese thrown in a pile are surrounded by Indonesian troops. In 1990 ,when the US Ambassador visited, a peaceful demonstration was staged by Timorese youths. After the ambassador left they were attacked, beaten, and it is believed some were killed. Jenny Groves 1990.

ETISC

East Timor
International
Support Center

THIS BROCHURE HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY
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